DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 304 679 CS 009 575

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TITLE Children's Comprehension of Inside View and Character Plans in Fiction: A Pilot Investigation.
INSTITUTION Bolt, Beranek and Newman, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.; Illinois Univ., Urbana. Center for the Study of Reading.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Feb 89
CONTRACT OEG-0087-C1001
NOTE 38p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Characterization; *Classroom Environment; Cognitive Structures; Elementary Education; *Fiction; *Reading Comprehension; Reading Improvement; Reading Instruction; *Reading Material Selection; Reading Research; Reading Strategies; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS Aesthetic Reading; *Author Reader Relationship; Text Factors

ABSTRACT

A pilot study was conducted to contrast children's comprehension of inside view (where writers share the inner thoughts of characters with readers) and character plans in an original story and its basal reader adaptation prior to and following participation in a reading conference focused upon these aspects of character. Subjects were 12 students in Grade 3. The pilot study developed an instructional context for the reading of fiction which integrates the communicative and cognitive aspects of reading with a focus on literary content. It also created a methodology for evaluating the students' comprehension of inside view and character plans. The study questioned: how editorial changes which redesign the fabric of a story influence the reader's comprehension; and how the instructional environment within which a story is discussed influences the reader's comprehension. Results of the pilot data suggest that the instructional context's emphasis on group storytelling, reciprocal teaching, and literary content encouraged the students to engage in comprehensive discussions on the texts' literary qualities as they monitored their comprehension of inside view and character plans. Despite the similarity of instruction across text groups, however, important differences in interpretation persisted. For this reason, the data suggest that it is the quality of the text which is of the utmost importance in helping students become intelligent readers. (Eight tables of data are included and 45 references are attached.) (Author/RAE)

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ED304679

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF READING

Technical Report No. 459

CHILDREN'S COMPREHENSION OF INSIDE VIEW AND CHARACTER PLANS IN FICTION: A PILOT INVESTIGATION

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BBN Laboratories

February 1989

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The work upon which this publication was based was supported in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement under Cooperative Agreement No. OEG 0087-C1001, with the Reading Research and Education Center. The publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the agency supporting the research.

CS009575

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Abstract

A pilot study was conducted with 12 students in Grade 3 to contrast children's comprehension of inside view and character plans in an original story and its basal reader adaptation prior to and following participation in a reading conference focused upon these aspects of character. The pilot study developed an instructional context for the reading of fiction which integrates the communicative and cognitive aspects of reading with a focus on literary content. It also created a methodology for evaluating the students' comprehension of inside view and character plans.

The study asked the following questions: How do editorial changes which redesign the fabric of a story influence the reader's comprehension? How does the instructional environment within which a story is discussed influence the reader's comprehension? The pilot data suggest that the instructional context's emphasis on group storytelling, reciprocal teaching, and literary content encouraged the students to engage in comprehensive discussions on the texts' literary qualities as they monitored their comprehension of inside view and character plans. Despite the similarity of instruction across text groups, however, important differences in interpretation persisted. For this reason, the data suggest that it is the quality of the text which is of the utmost importance in helping students become intelligent readers.

CHILDREN'S COMPREHENSION OF INSIDE VIEW AND CHARACTER PLANS IN FICTION: A PILOT INVESTIGATION

> Andrew stood up in a hurry. His reading group giggled. Especially Sharon. He couldn't stand that Sharon. She thought she knew everything! (Blume, 1971, p. 12)

Foremost among the aspects of character which contribute to the reader's understanding of fiction are inside view and character plans. Through inside view (Bruce, 1984, 1985; Steinberg & Bruce, 1980), writers share the inner thoughts, emotions, and perceptions of characters with readers. Through character plans (Bruce, 1978, 1980; Bruce & Newman, 1978), they build a network of goals and beliefs which often becomes the motivation for character actions or the justification for verbal exchanges. Whether by use of indirect methods such as dialogue or direct methods such as Blume's explicit exposition of emotion in the passage noted above, the writer's development of inside view and character plans helps to establish communication with the reader.

An earlier survey of stories in basal readers and trade books concluded that aspects of fiction such as inside view which contribute to text complexity and literary quality are less prominent in stories appearing in basal readers than in trade books (Bruce, 1984). This finding was supported by the results of a recent text analysis which contrasted inside view and character plans in an original story and its basal reader adaptation (Liebling, 1986). A line-by-line analysis of the original text and its basal reader adaptation revealed that in the course of adaptation, significant segments of the original text were deleted. These segments contain information which helps the experienced reader create believable characters and interpret character interactions with respect to each character's underlying goals and beliefs. The findings of the survey research and text analysis suggest that it is important "to investigate directly the effect of textual features . . . on children's comprehension and involvement with reading" (Bruce, 1984, p. 172). How do editorial changes which redesign the fabric of a story influence the reader's comprehension? How does the instructional environment within which a story is discussed influence the reader's comprehension?

To begin to answer these questions, a pilot study was conducted with 12 students in Grade 3 serving as subjects. The study contrasted children's comprehension of inside view and character plans in an original story and its basal reader adaptation prior to and following participation in a reading conference focused upon these aspects of character. The investigation had two goals: to develop an instructional context for the reading of fiction which integrates the communicative and cognitive aspects of reading with a focus on literary content; and, to develop a methodology for evaluating the students' comprehension of inside view and character plans in the original story and its basal reader adaptation. It is anticipated that the pilot study will be followed by a full investigation using a larger sample of students.

The Instructional Environment

The pilot study's instructional environment integrates three pedagogical approaches: group storytelling, reciprocal teaching, and focused discussion. These instructional methods reflect current research on the author-reader communication, the cognitive strategies readers use in comprehension, and the literary content of texts.

The Author-Reader Communication

The degree to which readers require a social, spoken context to share meaning with the temporally and spatially distant author varies with the complexity of the text and the purpose of the reading as well as with the individual's competence. In silent reading, experienced readers frequently comprehend text meaning by engaging in a "private, on-going, long-distance discussion" with the author (Goodman & Burke, 1980, p. 18). The reader's participation in this private discussion may serve as a sufficient

communicative context for meaning construction. Text interpretation through discussion or writing may not be necessary. Able readers readily integrate concepts gained from private reading with existing knowledge networks and draw upon these ideas in future discussion, writing, and reading. Readers who are acquiring the cognitive strategies and content knowledge which are central to comprehension as well as those who are reading complex material, however, often benefit from a more social communicative context within which meaning is shared.

A social communicative context for literacy development takes as a central principle that language is the primary means by which people share their ideas and experience. In daily cultural activities, the communicative purpose of language is often clear. When the transaction between participants is direct and observable, speakers can judge easily the success of the communication. The ability to clarify and modify point of view when miscommunication becomes apparent is arguably the most powerful advantage of the face-to-face spoken language context.

The communicative purpose of written language is not always as clear. Writers and readers may be trying to construct and share meaning with one another, but the inherent distance between author and reader results in an indirect exchange of meaning. Because the transaction of meaning between reader and writer occurs at an implied rather than real level of communication (Bruce, 1981a, 1981b), it is often desirable to override the distance problem by creating reading contexts in which readers cooperatively construct the meaning of text (Hansen, 1987; Raphael, 1984; Weaver, 1988).

Early language and literacy. The early language acquisition environment at home is perhaps the best example of a social, communicative context in which language production and comprehension are continuously intertwined (e.g., Bruner, 1983; Garvey, 1984). Child language research has shown consistently that children actively learn the patterns of their native language within a "language-rich environment" (Weaver, 1988). In first language acquisition, the child's transaction with the adult is crucial. Through this transaction, the child gradually learns how to use spoken language to achieve pragmatic purposes within varied social settings. Similarly, recent emergent literacy research has demonstrated that the adult's role is critical within the home and preschool contexts in which children learn about the functions of written language in society. Indeed, children who have ample exposure to and involvement with contextualized written language in supportive, communicative contexts at home and in preschool often begin to read and write without formal instruction (Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984; Taylor, 1983; Teale & Sulzby, 1986).

Group storyreading. One example of an instructional activity which reflects the social, collaborative qualities of the early language and literacy context is group storyreading (Cochran-Smith, 1984). When an adult reader and several children engage in group storyreading, they cooperatively create the text's meaning as the story is read aloud. The adult reader as well as the children are free to interrupt the reading to pose questions, to respond to questions or comments made by others, to refer to illustrations, or to imbue the reading with knowledge gained from prior experience. What may seem like a disconcerting presentation of the story becomes a highly involving social activity in which spoken language envelops the written text.

Cochran-Smith characterizes the adult's role in group storyreading as that of a meaning mediator who bridges the communication between the real writer and the real readers. As mediator, the adult often represents the writer by reading the actual story. If the adult reader believes that the experience of the children does not match that of the implied readers for whom the text was written, however, the storyreader becomes a commentator who leads the group in a discussion of the text's meaning. Cochran-Smith observes that comments on the text often take the form of one or two types of interactions: text-to-life and life-to-text. In text-to-life interactions, information, ideas, and concepts gained from text reading are used in solving everyday problems. In life-to-text interactions, each participant's language and world experience knowledge is drawn upon to help the group understand important story elements.

During the preschool years, participation in activities such as group storyreading affords young children an opportunity to use their spoken language competence as they communicate with the distant writer. Perhaps more important, however, young children are learning that comprehension can be a collaborative process in which individual group members help one another create meaning. Because many school-age children continue to need considerable support in reading comprehension, instructional approaches such as group storyreading may be beneficial well beyond the preschool years. Indeed, recent research on the teaching of reading in elementary school classrooms reports that contextualized reading and writing activities are beneficial in helping elementary school students understand the author-reader relationship. (Cullinan, 1987; Hansen, 1987; Johnson & Louis, 1987). The author's chair (Graves & Hansen, 1983; Hansen, 1983), for example, is an instructional activity in which students respond to the writing of professionals as well as classmates. One child represents the author's point of view in reading and commenting on the text while group members have an opportunity to engage the author, or at least the author's surrogate, in a dialogue.

Literacy activities which emphasize collaboration within a social context, however, do not generally characterize the instructional environment beyond preschool. As children become more independent in their reading and writing, opportunities to work cooperatively with other students are often replaced with decontextualized and non-collaborative assignments.

Cognitive Strategies in Reading Comprehension

The act of reading involves more than communication between writer and reader. Reading is both a communicative act and a cognitive act, leading Langer (1986) to define reading as a "sociocognitive process." One way in which inexperienced readers can begin to understand both the social and cognitive dimensions of reading is to participate in collaborative activities which emphasize the problem-solving strategies which experienced readers use in comprehension (Rosebery et al., in press).

Cognitive apprenticeship. The systematic teaching of the cognitive strategies used by expert readers is described by Collins, Brown & Newman (1987) as analogous to the apprenticeship environment in which craftspeople learn a trade. Typically, a master craftsperson initially controls instruction by modeling essential skills for the apprentice, discussing the ideas, and demonstrating those actions which are necessary to produce a desired product. As the apprentice gains competence, he or she takes control of the craft while the master becomes a coach whose main responsibility is to clarify misconceptions.

The social, collaborative nature of the master-apprentice relationship captures the essence of the early language and literacy context in which adults and young children create meaning cooperatively within highly contextualized settings. Furthermore, the apprenticeship model emphasizes the centrality of thought in language comprehension. For these reasons, it is a particularly appropriate means to convey the social and cognitive dimensions of reading.

The cognitive apprenticeship to which Collins, Brown & Newman refer views the act of reading as an instance of problem-solving in which the reader is required to use general cognitive strategies to comprehend text. The task of the novice reader is to acquire the strategies he or she needs to become an effective interpreter of written text. These strategies are learned within the context of an expert-novice dialogue in which the teacher and the students collaboratively interpret and respond to a particular text. Because the dialogue emphasizes the importance of contextualized written language, cooperation in creating meaning, and cognitive strategies in interpreting text, it provides an opportunity for the teacher to focus the students' attention on the reading process. Cognitive apprenticeship, however, does not yet play a significant role in literacy development during the elementary school years.

Reciprocal teaching. One cognitive apprenticeship approach which has received considerable attention is reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). In reciprocal teaching, novice readers apprentice

with an expert reader who models the reading process and acts as a coach to monitor comprehension. In the course of reading particular texts for specified purposes, the master reader guides the apprentices through the reading process, coaching the students in the use of cognitive strategies believed to be beneficial in reading comprehension. The expert-novice dialogue emphasizes strategy rather than content although the expectation is that domain-specific knowledge is acquired as the meaning of written texts is constructed.

The reading conference begins with a silent reading of the text segment which will be discussed. The master reader initiates the dialogue by modeling the strategies which the apprentices are learning. Five strategies are emphasized: questioning, responding, clarifying, summarizing, and predicting. The dialogue typically involves five steps.

First, the master reader poses a question which directs the apprentices' attention to an important concept posed in the text. Because good readers are believed to ask themselves questions about text meaning as they read, self-questioning is considered essential to successful comprehension.

Second, the group responds to the question, trying to arrive at a consensus as to the text's meaning. The group is encouraged to refer to the text itself in responding to the question. The importance of collaboration in creating meaning from written text is emphasized by treating reading as a special instance of more general problem-solving which occurs in everyday situations.

Third, apprentices ask clarifying questions until each participant feels that he or she has achieved an understanding of the text. The types of questions and the responses to the questions provide an indication of the apprentices' comprehension of the text. The face-to-face conversational context of the small group reading conference helps to contextualize the written text and encourages participants to seek clarification of misunderstood concepts.

Fourth, the master reader summarizes the group's cooperative interpretation of the text segment. Summarizing, like questioning, is a comprehension monitoring technique. A summary which matches the group's interpretation suggests that comprehension of the text segment has been achieved. If the group disagrees with the summary, further discussion is necessary.

Finally, the master reader predicts what is likely to follow in the next segment. The prediction guides future reading, providing the apprentices with a means to evaluate their comprehension as they continue to read and engage in further dialogue. When comprehension matches the prediction, a meaning hypothesis is confirmed. When a mismatch occurs, the apprentices either must seek clarification of the text or reject the hypothesis in favor of a new hypothesis.

Throughout the process, the master reader explicitly models the strategies used in constructing text meaning and monitors how well the apprentices are comprehending the text as they use the strategies. At first, the master's role in the dialogue is prominent. As the apprentices gain competence, however, they take greater control of the conference, allowing the master reader's role to face to that of a group member. As the complete text is read and discussed, each group member has an opportunity to become the master reader.

Reciprocal teaching, like group storyreading, is an example of an instructional approach in which the interpretation of written text occurs within a collaborative, spoken language context. The strength of group storyreading within the early language and literacy environment is found in the competent reader's mediation of the real-writer/real-reader communication. In contrast, the primary strength of reciprocal teaching is found in the experienced reader's modeling of the problem-solving strategies used in monitoring one's comprehension of a text. Reciprocal teaching, thus, not only extends the early literacy social context but also provides explicit instruction on comprehension monitoring techniques.

The Literary Content of Texts

Neither reciprocal teaching nor group storyreading, however, have as their primary purpose the discussion of the literary content of written texts. Both activities assume that the ability to read literature intelligently is acquired as readers learn to communicate with the distant writer or to use comprehension monitoring strategies as they read.

However, this assumption may not be warranted. Despite participation in instructional activities which emphasize the sociocognitive aspects of reading, many students do not acquire a fundamental understanding of the writer's craft. To help students learn that writers and readers construct meaning by reflecting upon point of view as expressed in language choices, explicit instruction on literary content can be integrated with sociocognitive reading activities.

As children learn to read and write, it is important that they have ample opportunities to read texts in which the content is sufficiently interesting to warrant discussion of literary quality. In elementary reading instruction, however, the primary source for texts continues to be the basal reading series. Basal readers are criticized frequently for their emphasis on skills rather than the literary content of stories (Cheney, 1987). Ravitch (1986) bemoans the "striking neglect of classic literature" in current basals while Ohanian (1987) is dismayed that the "ruffles and flourishes" which characterize the language of engaging literature are often deleted from basal reader adaptations of fiction. Cheney (1987) argues that the current emphasis of basal readers on process and skills rather than the enduring quality and style of the selections is misguided. She writes, "In the basal readers most widely used now, 10% or less of the content is classic children's literature" and that selections of contemporary fiction are "generally by writers whose names are unknown outside the textbook industry" (p. 14). She recommends that reading programs be developed which include more original works and fewer stories written according to readability formulas. Until this occurs, elementary school teachers should rely on tradebooks rather than reading textbooks in teaching reading.

Cheney's recommendations also have been voiced by other educators (Rothman, 1987). The irony in Cheney's remarks is that her recommendations arise from the findings of the recent national assessment of 17-year-olds' knowledge of history and literature (Ravitch & Finn, 1987), a study which measured literacy on the basis of the student's command of isolated names, dates, and facts. The benefit of providing children with texts that are examples of enduring or high quality contemporary literature is not to ensure that students recognize the names of important authors of the titles of important works. Rather, it is to help them become intelligent readers as they learn how great writers use the elements of literature to create exemplary works.

Focused discussion. Many educators recommend that discussion of the literary content of stories become the core component of the reading program (Carter, 1985; Cullinan, 1987; Hains, 1982; Johnson & Louis, 1987; Lamme, 1981). Moss (1984), for example, creates focus units on topics such as recurrent characters in stories written by a particular author, fantasy in fiction, and patterns in folk tales from different countries. Using a discussion technique similar to the "shared inquiry" of Junior Great Books (1984), Moss develops an instructional context in which the teacher poses questions related to the literary quality of the selection and students build their interpretation as they respond to the questions. Although the approach can be criticized because the students generally do not generate the questions for discussion, it nevertheless places the critical analysis of literature at the center of the reading program. In stressing the importance of social context when students read, Hansen (1987) and Hepler (1982) urge teachers to abandon the traditional ability groupings of reading instruction in favor of diverse communities of readers who support one another in their responses to literature.

Despite the groundswell of support for the development of literacy through the study of literature, this approach is not yet central to classroom reading instruction. Many classrooms continue to rely on basal reading programs, some of which claim to be "literature-based." However, it is often difficult to discern a focus on the elements of literature amidst the overwhelming number of activities which are

extraneous to the critical analysis of texts. Even those classrooms are attempting to use tradebooks as a central component of the reading program may not be achieving the goal of developing literacy through literature. Without a defined curriculum of study or specific guide materials to help the teacher discuss the literary qualities of stories with students, teachers cannot easily engage students in the critical analysis of literature.

The analysis of fiction. The study of the elements of fiction is an important component of a reading program which emphasizes the literary content of texts. When an experienced reader interprets and responds to fiction, she must consider important elements of the writing as she establishes communication with the writer and monitors her comprehension of the text. The expert reader's comprehension of a novel or short story requires attention to the plot, characters, setting, point of view, style and tone, themes, symbols, and type of fiction (Hall, 1987; Hersey, 1981; Pickering & Hoeper, 1982). In interpreting the text, the reader must consider both the independent contributions of the elements and the integration of the elements within the whole story. The reader creates the meaning of the written text by responding to the elements of fiction constructed by the writer.

Character. The study of character is one component of a reading program which emphasizes the analysis of fiction. Because fiction often succeeds or fails on the "roundness" of characters (Forster, 1927; Hall, 1987), it is important for students to read a variety of texts in which the writer's creation of character is central to the success of the story. As students begin to discriminate the qualities which make memorable protagonists and antagonists round or "dynamic" from those which make secondary characters "flat" or "one-dimensional," they begin to understand the importance of character development in the creation of enduring fiction.

In the study of realistic fiction, it is particularly important for students to understand how believable characters are created. Writers typically use two means to create characters who behave consistently unless motivated to alter their behavior by underlying goals or beliefs. First, the writer may directly tell the reader how to view the characters by his or her choice of a character's name, description of physical traits, educational background, social and economic status, or interests, and exposition of values, thoughts, emotions or perceptions. Second, the writer may indirectly show the reader aspects of character by creating anecdotal scenes in which the protagonist interacts with other characters. In this case, the reader gains an opportunity to infer aspects of character on the basis of his or her interpretation of the action and dialogue.

Method

Text Analysis

Freckle Juice (Blume, 1971) was selected for text analysis from a corpus of original stories and their basal reader adaptations (Liebling, 1986). The corpus was collected to study the literary features which contribute to text complexity and to the reader's involvement in stories. Sentence-by-sentence contrasts of the original stories and their adaptations revealed editorial changes to the originals which appeared to have altered their quality. One common type of editorial change was the deletion of large segments of text.

The basal version of *Freckle Juice* is an example of an adaptation in which a significant number of the original text's passages were deleted. The interacting plans and inside view text analysis suggested that the deleted segments contain information that helps the experienced reader build representations of the characters and their interactions. Because this interpretation was supported in a discussion of the story with 20 elementary school teachers, *Freckle Juice* was selected as the text for this pilot investigation. Table 1 identifies the categories which were the basis of the inside view and character plans analysis of *Freckle Juice*. The categories were used to identify and classify inside view and character plans information within each sentence; to identify the type of text reference; and, to classify the reader's interpretation as literal or inferential.

[Insert Table 1 about here.]

The 500 sentences of the original text were divided into three social sequences. Social Sequence 1 (SS1), which is analyzed in Liebling (1986), consists of sentences 1-200 of the original text. For example, sentence 1 of the original text is, "Andrew Marcus wanted freckles." Using the categories, the information within this sentence was classified as follows: The writer identifies the protagonist by giving him a common name. By exposition, the writer reveals the central goal of the protagonist; Andrew wants freckles. In interpreting literally the explicit text reference, the reader comprehends that the story is about a typical boy who wants to get freckles.

The text analysis yielded an interpretation of the story which included the following components: a cooperative interaction plan in which Andrew and his antagonist, Sharon, participate; Andrew's and Sharon's independent goals and beliefs; and, an inside view of Andrew and Sharon. The relationship between these elements was then represented pictorially to illustrate the relationship between the actions of the mutually-believed, albeit false, plans and the goals and beliefs underlying each character's real plan.

In addition to the sentence-by-sentence analysis by category, the text analysis tabulated data on the number of sentences in the original text which were deleted in the basal version and the inside view and character plans information which was deleted as a result of the editorial changes. For example, of the 200 sentences which comprise SS1, 83 were deleted in the basal version, or 42% of the total. A further breakdown reveals that 72% of the sentences containing information about Andrew's relationship with his mother were deleted; 35% of the sentences containing information about Andrew's relationship with his peer, Sharon, were deleted; and, 42% of the sentences containing information about Andrew's relationship with his teacher were deleted.

The identification of information which had been deleted from the adaptation of *Freckle Juice* suggests that the basal version is, indeed, a different story from the original. Several important episodes in which the writer shows the reader how Andrew feels when he interacts with Sharon and his peers, for example, are deleted. These episodes help the reader understand the motivation for Andrew's and Sharon's actions. The effect of the deletions, thus, is that the experienced reader's interpretation of the story differs with respect to the particular version which has been read.

The pilot investigation was conducted to determine whether inexperienced readers who read the original version of *Freckle Juice* interpret it differently from those who read the adaptation.

Subjects

Twelve children, 6 girls and 6 boys, served as subjects. The children were selected randomly from the predominantly white, middle-class, English-speaking population of students in Grade 3 of a suburban school. The group was intentionally diverse with respect to reading ability although the children were judged by their teachers to be able to decode the texts.

Materials

The original version of *Freckle Juice* (Blume, 1971) and an adaptation of the text appearing in a basal reading series served as the pilot materials. *Freckle Juice* is an example of an engaging contemporary story which is commonly enjoyed by children in Grades 1-3.

Procedure

The children were assigned randomly to the text conditions. Group 1 consisted of three boys and three girls who read the basal version of the story prior to the day of the pilot study. Group 2 consisted of three boys and three girls who read the original version of the story prior to the day of the pilot study.

The pilot study consisted of a pretest, an instructional activity, and a posttest. The pretest and posttest sessions were audiotaped, and the instructional activities were videotaped.

Pretest. The pretest consisted of a retelling of the story in which special attention was paid to the character interaction. Each student was asked to build representations of the characters as they interacted with one another. It was suggested that the students think about the characters as people who have thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. The children were asked to think about the motivation for character actions by trying to relate each character's goals and beliefs to his or her actions.

The instructional environment. The instructional environment was structured similarly for both groups to integrate a sociocognitive view of reading with a focus on the literary content of the text. Three activities were intertwined: group storytelling to emphasize reading as a communicative act; reciprocal teaching to emphasize reading as a cognitive problem-solving act; and, focused discussion to emphasize the literary content of the story.

The inside view and interacting plans analysis of the story was used to focus the reading conferences on inside view and character plans. Prior to the pilot study, the experienced reader annotated the original and basal versions of the story to highlight important inside view and character plans information. The annotation, thus, provided support for the experienced reader who facilitated the discussion of the story with the students.

Each version of the story was introduced as a humorous text with serious themes related to the personal qualities of individuals and their relationships with one another. The students were told that the author had constructed the main character, Andrew, in such a way as to help the reader think of Andrew as someone they know. The author also had created a relationship between Andrew and the other important characters: Sharon, Andrew's antagonist in school; Miss Kelly, Andrew's teacher; and, Andrew's mother. The students were told that in the course of discussion, the group would try to understand both Andrew's and Sharon's actions with respect to their thoughts, emotions, and perceptions. In so doing, the independent and interacting plans of the characters would emerge. The students were asked to pay special attention to the concurrence or conflict of character plans and to the ways by which independent plans were altered on the basis of each character's awareness of another's beliefs or goals.

An overview of the story themes was presented by asking the students to draw upon their life experience in reflecting upon boy-girl relationships in school, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's appearance, self-concept, and qualities which are to be admired in parent and teachers.

Following the introduction of the story, the reading conference procedures were described to the children. Each story was divided into three social sequences, as identified in the text analysis. Each social sequence was subdivided into a number of segments for purposes of discussion. SS1, for example, was divided into two segments. Students were asked to reread silently each segment of the text which would be discussed. After rereading the segment, each group engaged in a discussion which included a group storytelling followed by a reciprocal dialogue focused upon inside view and character plans.

Each student had an opportunity to act as discussion leader in the reading conference. The leader began by briefly retelling the segment under discussion, allowing group members to make comments if they so wished. The leader then asked a question which helped the group think about the characters' plans or thoughts, emotions, and perceptions. The leader's role was to encourage the group to respond to the question, to clarify important issues, and to provide feedback on the group's understanding of the text segment. At the conclusion of the discussion, the leader summarized the discussion of the segment and predicted what might be important in the next segment of text to be discussed.

Throughout the discussion, group members responded to the leader and to each other, making comments and posing new questions related to the general topic selected by the leader.

Students then reread another text segment. A new leader was selected to discuss the next segment. After the entire text was discussed in this manner the group concluded the session with a critical evaluation of the text and suggestions for follow-up activities.

Posttest. The posttest was identical to the pretest. Each student was asked to retell the story, paying particular attention to the writer's development of inside view and character plans.

Data Analysis

Reading conference and pretest/posttest data related to the two segments of text comprising SS1 were analyzed. Segment 1 introduced Andrew Marcus as the protagonist, identified Andrew's goal of getting freckles, and presented Andrew's reasons for wanting freckles. Segment 2 included the cooperative interaction plan in which Andrew obtained the recipe for freckle juice from Sharon, the antagonist.

First, summary data were tabulated for each group's reading conference to examine the effectiveness of the instructional environment in emphasizing the sociocognitive aspects of reading and focusing the discussion on inside view and character plans. Is information which was identified as important in the text analysis discussed during the reading conferences? What are the similarities and differences in the discussions with reference to the particular version of the story read by the group?

Table 1 identifies the inside view and character plans categories which were used to classify the information in each participant's contribution during the reading conference. The coding of the transcripts paralleled the analysis of the text although additional information about the instructional context was noted. For each turn of conversation, the speaker and the speaker's role was identified as well as the type of activity to which the speaker contributed: group storytelling, reciprocal dialogue, and/or focused discussion. Detail was then added to further identify the nature of the contribution. If, for example, the speaker was serving as leader, he or she might have offered a question to help the group think about Andrew's beliefs about his problems. The turn was coded to reflect the question strategy in reciprocal dialogue and focused discussion on the belief states in Andrew's real plan. The type of reference, either text or life, was also indicated. Finally, it was of interest to note whether the student interpreted the information literally or inferentially.

Second, the transcripts of the pretest and posttest were analyzed to evaluate the students' comprehension of inside view and character plans. Regardless of the particular version read, what influence did participation in the reading conference have on interpretation of inside view and character plans? What influence did the reading of a particular version of the story have on comprehension of inside view and character plans?

The categories used to analyze the text for the presence of inside view and character plans were also used to evaluate the students' comprehension. Precedent for this approach is found in two studies which used interacting plans analysis to assess comprehension. First, Steinberg (1981) used an interacting plans analysis of *Yagua Days*, written by Crux Martel, to contrast a fifth grade student's comprehension of character plans in the story with her analysis of character interactions. She reports that the text's development of character beliefs was a source of the student's comprehension difficulty. Second, Newman & Bruce (1986) contrasted the comprehension of character plans in a videotaped Bert & Ernie skit by students in Grades 1, 3, and 4, and 6 with that of college students. They found that the college students' interpretation of character plans differed considerably from that of the younger children. They suggest that young children's critical beliefs about human interaction may be sufficiently different from those of adults to lead to interpretations of story events that the adult writer may not have intended.

Because the number of subjects for the pilot investigation was small, no effort was made to perform statistical contrasts on the data. Instead, as indicated in Table 1, the pretest and posttest data for each student was contrasted by examining the content of each sentence in the story retelling. The categories were used to identify inside view and character plans information noted by the students in their retellings; to identify the text references; and, to classify comprehension as literal or inferential.

Summary data were compiled for each group of students on the basis of the pretest and posttest data. If at least three students in a group cited a particular aspect of inside view and character plans in retelling the story, that aspect was included in a profile of the group's representation of the story's meaning.

Discussion of Findings

Instructional Environment

How effective was the instructional environment in integrating the social and cognitive aspects of reading with a focus on the literary content of the text? Students who read the original version and students who read the basal version participated in reading conferences which consisted of group storytelling, reciprocal dialogue, and focused discussion. An analysis of the reading conference transcripts reveals that the instructional environment encouraged both groups of students to discuss the literary qualities of the text which they had read.

Group storytelling. The group storytelling component encouraged the students to think of reading as a means to communicate with the distant writer. Group storytelling served as a first attempt to identify important information in the segment. It became a point of departure for the discussion which followed. Despite encouragement from the facilitator, students in both groups found it difficult to engage in group storytelling, preferring to allow the leader to summarize the text without contributions from others. As the students became more comfortable with the procedures, however, their storytelling became more cooperative. In Group 1, the students who read the basal version, for example, the first segment was retold in 1 turn by the leader; in Group 2, the first segment was retold in 5 turns by the leader and a group member. Group 1's retelling of the second segment, however, consisted of 12 turns by the leader, several group members, and the facilitator; Group 2's retelling consisted of 11 turns by the leader, two group members, and the facilitator. In both groups, expansion by individual members tended to be simple correction of mistated details, extension of events, support for statements, or clarification of references.

The following example is Group 2's retelling of the second segment. Angela, Tom, and Sarah describe Andrew's and Sharon's interaction in which Sharon offers to give Andrew a recipe for freckle juice. Andrew considers the offer, decides to buy the recipe, and the exchange takes place.

ER: OK. Now I'd like to have a new storyteller and discussion leader. Now we will be talking about Andrew's and Sharon's conversation about freckle juice and Andrew's decision to buy the recipe. Angela, will you begin by telling us about the next part of the story?

A: Well, and then, they say, and the teacher says, "Sharon, you lead the girls and, Andrew you lead the boys." And so, um, um, getting in line, Sharon goes, and um, Nicky looks over and she goes I know how, she whispers, I know how to get freckles and she tells him the secret recipe.

ER: Aha

A: She says, um, she said she had it in her family for years and if he brought 50 cents the next day she'd give it to him.

T: I think, there was one part, um, when she said, um, that, ah, it was like, she goes, well, OK, you gotta give me 50 cents by the end of so and so.

A: Tomorrow.

T: Oh, yeah.

A: Anyway, Andrew doesn't know what he should do. He really doesn't trust her. He doesn't believe her. Why should he go along with her if she's not really his friend?

S: But he really wants them bad enough. He'll end up with them.

All: Yeah.

A: So he goes home to think about it. And so, um, that night, cause it says on Chapter 2 that night Andrew had trouble sleeping, thinking about freckle juice. Should I do it or not? And he finally decides he's going to do it. And, um, he's wondering, he was sitting down and he goes, I wonder why, uh, me and my family don't have freckles. He goes, the money, he gets the 50 cents and wraps it up in toilet paper.

This dialogue illustrates some of the social features of group storytelling. First, Angela acts as the author and retells the text, citing the setting in which Sharon and Andrew discuss the proposal. Sharon uses the authority of family history as proof that she has a solution to Andrew's problem and sets the price for her solution. Second, Tom extends the event by referring to the time period in which the transaction is to take place. Because Tom seems to have forgotten exactly when the transaction is to occur, Angela notes that the exchange will occur tomorrow. This detail is important because it foreshadows SS2 when Andrew concocts freckle juice in order to get freckles. Third, Tom supports Angela's clarification. Fourth, Angela shifts to a commentator role to reflect on Andrew's traits. Angela notes that Andrew is cautious and unsure, does not trust Sharon or her motives, and wonders whether Sharon is really his friend. Fifth, Sarah asserts that Andrew is intent upon getting freckles so he will go along with the proposal. Finally, Angela concludes the retelling by returning to the role of author to summarize Andrew's decision-making process.

Reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching encouraged the students to think of reading as a cognitive problem-solving activity. Students used comprehension-monitoring strategies as they engaged in the process of cooperatively constructing the story's meaning. For both groups of students, a reciprocal teaching dialogue followed the group storytelling of each text segment.

Throughout the reciprocal teaching dialogues related to Social Sequence 1, the students relied extensively on the experienced reader to guide the flow of the discussion. The experienced reader's primary role was that of a facilitator who managed the flow of the discussion by monitoring the student's use of strategies as they engaged in the reading process. In addition to the role as manager, the facilitator provided considerable support for each group's leader and participants. The facilitator guided the students in generating questions for discussion, referring to the text or life experience when responding to questions, summarizing the discussion, and predicting the events of the next text segment.

As the students became more familiar with the process and strategies, however, they began to take greater control of the dialogues. When the ramifications of Andrew's decision to make and drink the freckle juice were discussed in Social Sequence 3, for example, the experienced reader's role had faded to that of a group participant who responded to the leader's questions in much the same manner as did the students.

In the following examples, the students use the comprehension-monitoring strategies to discuss the literary quality of the story. The first example is a portion of Group 2's dialogue following the group storytelling cited earlier.

ER: A, can you think of another question which will help us think about Andrew and Sharon as real people?

A: How does Andrew feel about Sharon?

G: Umm, he, um, she goes, she says, I heard you and Nicky talking about freckles. And she goes, do you want to know how to get them? He says, I guess I might want to.

E: Yeah, and another part is Andrew doesn't trust her. It says in the story, "Andrew didn't believe Sharon for a minute." Why should he trust her if she's not really his friend?

A: How can you tell she's not really his friend?

T: Well, She's always laughing at him, making fun of him, like before in the reading group.

S: And now she's tricking him! There's no such thing as freckle juice!

A: Does Andrew know she's tricking him?

B: Well, kind of. He says, "You don't even have freckles." But she says, "Look closely, Andrew, I've got six on my nose. He says, "Big deal, a lot of good six will do you." And she tells him how many you can get and how long, if you drink it fast enough.

T: And the more you drink, the more you'll get.

The dialogue continues for 17 turns in which the discussion explores Andrew's view of Sharon's odd physical behaviors, exemplified in the metaphor, "Sharon's tongue reminded Andrew of a frog catching flies." The discussion ends when the experienced reader asks for a summarization of the segment:

ER: A, could you summarize the part of the book we've just read?

A: Well, Sharon tries to sell Andrew a secret recipe for freckle juice, but it's only a trick. Sharon doesn't really like Andrew and Andrew doesn't really like Sharon. Andrew doesn't know if he should believe her. He never heard of freckle juice, but he really wants to get freckles. So he thinks it over and decides to buy the recipe for $.50. And that's what he does the next day in school.

ER: That's excellent, what do you expect to happen in the next part?

A: Andrew makes the recipe and tries to get freckles.

In this portion of the transcript, the students demonstrate that they monitor their comprehension of the story as they participate in the reciprocal dialogue. The students engage in the reading process by using all of the reciprocal teaching comprehension-monitoring strategies as they interpret Andrew's and Sharon's interaction in the text segment.

The facilitator begins the dialogue by guiding the leader to pose an inside view question. When Gerry fails to respond to Angela's question on Andrew's view of Sharon, Elizabeth responds by referring to the text as she shares several important insights on the characters' relationship. Angela then extends her first question by asking for clarification on the nature of Andrew's and Sharon's friendship. This

question motivates Tom to reference an earlier scene in the story when the reader has an opportunity to observe first-hand Andrew's and Sharon's actions and conversation during their reading group. Sarah, too, finds the question motivating and offers her view of Sharon's actions. Sharon's comment suggests yet another clarifying question. Angela seeks more information on Andrew's awareness of Sharon's motivation for her offer. Bill and Tom then refer to the text's dialogue to find evidence that Andrew does not trust Sharon, despite her apparent cooperativeness in offering a remedy for Andrew's problem. The example concludes when the facilitator guides the leader to summarize the segment and predict the events of the next segment which will be read.

In contrast, the following is an example of Group 1's dialogue after they retold the second segment of Social Sequence 1.

ER: That was great, B. Now, can you think of a question which will help us think about Andrew and Sharon as people?

B: Do you think Andrew believes he can get freckles by drinking freckle juice?

M: No, not really, but he's kind of desperate, you know.

B: But does Andrew like Sharon?

J: Well, he thinks she's kind of wacko. She bugs him.

ER: Are they friends, Andrew and Sharon?

D: They could, be but I'm not sure. She just sort of likes to psst, talk in, and say psst. . . .

C: But it says, "Andrew didn't believe Sharon for a minute!" A recipe for freckle juice? You're nuts, Sharon! Are you out of your gourd or something?

B: She he didn't trust her, I guess.

M: Maybe she tricked him a couple of times before. She's a nerd.

ER: So if she's tricked him before, should he believe her now?

W: Well, he must want those freckles pretty bad.

ER: Now, what do you expect to happen in the next part?

B: He'll get the recipe, make it, and get freckles.

This example demonstrates that the basal version of the story shares some of the literary content features identified in the original. Group 1 uses reciprocal dialogue strategies to attempt to uncover the character goals, beliefs, and inside view which motivate Andrew's and Sharon's interaction in this text segment.

The dialogue begins when the facilitator asks Bruce, the leader, to pose an inside view question. Bruce's question concerns Andrew's view of himself rather than his view of Sharon. Mark responds by drawing on his life experience with the concept of desperation to infer Andrew's state of mind. This response leads Bruce to pose a clarifying question on Andrew's view of Sharon. Because the basal version offers few references to help the reader build Andrew's and Sharon's relationship, Jennifer responds by drawing on her experience with people she may not like to infer Andrew's view of Sharon. The facilitator then tries to pursue the nature of the friendship with a clarifying question. Donald

attempts to refer to the text to describe a scene in which the characters interact, but it is Catherine who provides an important insight. Catherine refers to the text to note that Andrew didn't believe Sharon. To this reference, she adds an inference drawn from life experience which suggests that the characters can't be on the best of terms because Andrew thinks Sharon is nuts. Bruce then summarizes the dialogue to indicate that Andrew does not trust Sharon. This allows several inferences on the possibility that Sharon may be tricking Andrew. Wendy and Bruce affirm that Andrew will probably ignore the possibility that Sharon is tricking him because he really wants to achieve his goal of getting freckles. The dialogue concludes with a prediction of the events to follow in the next segment of text.

Focused Discussion

The experienced reader's familiarity with the original story's literary features and the editorial changes which had been made to the adaptation was critical to the students' success as literary critics. The text analysis of the story was used to organize the reading conferences. It suggested appropriate divisions of the text into social sequences and subdivisions of the sequences into segments for purposes of discussion. It also was used to annotate each version, highlighting important information related to inside view and character plans. The annotations helped to ensure that both groups discussed similar topics. In addition, the annotations signaled those segments of the original text which had been deleted in the basal. Knowing what had been deleted gave the experienced reader an opportunity to encourage the students to draw upon personal experience in trying to "fill-in" the information gaps in the adaptation.

The match between the interpretation of the text provided in the text analysis and the points discussed in the reading conferences proved to be excellent although several aspects of the experienced reader's text interpretation were not discussed in the reading conferences. Due to time limitations, it simply was not possible to discuss all aspects of the story with the students.

The events of the original version of *Freckle Juice* are presented strongly from Andrew's point of view. Andrew is the only reasonably round character in the story. Sharon is developed weakly, and the other minor characters were one dimensional. Although it is possible to construct a point of view for Sharon, and to isolate Andrew's view of his mother and teacher, the more prominent aspects to the story concern Andrew's view of himself and Sharon, Andrew's goals and beliefs, and Andrew's and Sharon's interaction.

The events of the basal version of *Freckle Juice* are also presented strongly from Andrew's point of view. Indeed Sharon is as static as the other minor characters. In addition, the adaptation retains Andrew's and Sharon's interaction regarding the freckle juice recipe, but deletes many references to Andrew's view of his mother and his teacher, his inattentiveness in school, and his adversarial relationship with Sharon. The latter references are especially important because they contribute to the writer's creation of believable characters.

Despite a focus on these aspects of inside view and character plans during the reading conferences of both groups, two important differences were noted in the group discussions. First, students who read the basal version of the story were more likely to infer inside view and character plans on the basis of life experience than they were to refer to the text as support for their comments. In contrast, students who read the original version were more likely to refer to the text in support of their interpretation of inside view and character plans.

This difference is illustrated clearly in the portions of transcript presented above. When the Group 1 students discussed Andrew's and Sharon's relationship, they described Sharon as "nuts," "out of your gourd" and "wacko" and said that Andrew thinks that "Sharon bugs him." They were forced to draw upon their experience with peers to characterize Sharon because their version of the text provided no explicit exposition of Andrew's view of Sharon nor did it provide any scenes in which the reader could observe Andrew's and Sharon's interaction prior to Sharon's offer of the freckle juice recipe. Their

inferences were inarticulate, but essentially compensated for the deletion of information on the adversarial relationship, on Sharon's goal of playing a trick on Andrew, and Sharon's belief that Andrew can be made a fool.

Group 2's discussion of Andrew's and Sharon's relationship, however, was firmly grounded in the text. Several students cited text references to support their interpretation. Andrew's goals of getting freckles, allowing himself to be deceived, and engaging in pragmatic cooperation to achieve this private purpose were discussed as were his beliefs about his problems, the likelihood that the drinking of freckle juice will lead to freckles, and his view of Sharon. The text references helped to establish Andrew as a believable character despite the absurdity of the story's premise.

Second, differences in the discussions suggest that the students' interpretations of the story vary with respect to the particular version that has been read. While the intervention helped to fill-in information gaps in the basal version of the text, it did not eliminate alternative representations of the story's meaning.

Evidence for this finding is presented in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 which contrast Group 1's and Group 2's discussion of Andrew's and Sharon's interaction, Andrew's view of self, Andrew's and Sharon's central interaction is described as the cooperative interaction plan. The plan consists of a series of actions in which they both engage. By their participation, they signal one another that their apparent goals are to be friendly, cooperative, and supportive. The plan is presented similarly in both versions of the story. Table 2 reveals that the students have no difficulty interpreting literally the actions of the mutually-believed plan.

[Insert Table 2 about here.]

Table 3 contrasts Group 1's and Group 2's interpretations of Andrew's view of himself. Inside view can be thought of as a foundation of traits, thoughts, emotions, and perceptions. It conveys a general feeling about the character and the character's view of the world. The students' literal or inferential interpretations of Andrew's view of himself is drawn primarily from text references. Several aspects of Andrew's view of himself are shared by students who read different versions of the story: Andrew is jealous of Nicky because Nicky has freckles; Andrew feels stupid; Andrew is cautious in his response to others; Andrew vacilates between appearing gullible and realistic; and, Andrew is pragmatic. However, only the students who read the original version of the story view Andrew as a daydreamer who is often ridiculed by others, who wants to improve himself, and who feels dumb.

[Insert Table 3 about here.]

Table 4 contrasts Group 1's and Group 2's interpretations of Andrew's view of Sharon. It is here that Group 1 and Group 2 differed most dramatically in their interpretations. The students who read the original version of the story constructed Andrew's view of Sharon by literally or inferentially interpreting text references. They created an elaborate vision of Andrew's and Sharon's adversarial relationship on the basis of the text references. Group 1, however, had very little help from the writer in creating Andrew's view of Sharon. They tried to use life experience to conjure up a characterization of Andrew's and Sharon's relationship, but this compensation for the text deficits paled in comparison to that created by Group 1.

[Insert Table 4 about here.]

Table 5 contrasts Group 1's and Group 2's interpretations of Andrew's goals and beliefs. Goals and beliefs provide the essential motivation for character action. To fully appreciate the actions described in the cooperative interaction plan, for example, it is critical that the reader uncover Andrew's and Sharon's underlying goals and beliefs. Inside view may provide a general frame for interpreting actions, but it is an understanding of goals and beliefs which is most important in comprehension.

Both groups clearly interpreted Andrew's goals as wanting to get freckles and reasoned that he wanted freckles so that he would not have problems with his mother. His mother wanted him to wash his dirty neck which made him late for school; if he had freckles, he would not have to wash. Both groups referred to the goal of self-deception and discussed Andrew's internal conflict in which he considered whether there was such a thing as freckle juice. The discrepancies arise in the interpretation of Andrew's problems with his teacher and his peers. Group 2 mentions Andrew's inattentiveness in school and subsequent ridicule by his peers frequently while Group 1 does not discuss these problems. Similarly, the notion of pragmatic cooperation is discussed at length by Group 2, but only once by Group 1. Finally, Group 1 refers to the text references which describe Andrew's and Sharon's adversarial interpersonal relationship; Andrew's beliefs about this relationship help to explain the notion of pragmatic cooperation. Group 2, however, must infer this interpersonal conflict on the basis of life experience.

[Insert Table 5 about here.]

Pretest/Posttest

The pretest/posttest retelling were contrasted to answer two questions: How did participation in the reading conference influence comprehension of inside view and character plans, regardless of the version of the story which had been read? How did the reading of a particular version of the story influence the students' interpretation of inside view and character plans? To answer these questions, each student's retellings were analyzed for the presence of inside view and character plans information. When at least three students in a group cited a particular piece of information, that piece was added to a summary profile of the group's representation of the story's meaning.

The following excerpts from the pretest and posttest retellings illustrate how the content analysis was conducted. Presented below are examples of the pretest/posttest retellings of segment 1 by one student who read the basal version and one student who read the original version. In segment 1, Andrew is introduced as the protagonist. Andrew's goal of getting freckles is stated. Andrew's motivation for wanting freckles, with respect to his problems at home and at school, is identified through exposition and/or action and dialogue.

The first excerpt is Tom's retelling of segment 1 of the original version of the story:

> Well, this book is about a kid named Andrew and, um, he liked to count his friend's freckles. You know, they were all over him and everything. And he wanted to have freckles of his own. . . . Oh, and there's another really weird part in the beginning, he kept on looking at his friend's freckles like this, and he just kept on looking at him, and he was daydreaming (laughs). And the teacher was like, "Ah Andrew, Andrew." And he just didn't get into his work and stuff. So that's why he wanted freckles.

In this segment, Tom conveys several important aspects of Andrew's inside view and character plans, but his retelling is riddled with information gaps. Tom identifies Andrew as the protagonist and notes that Andrew wants freckles, just like his friend has. He then jumps ahead to segment 2 before returning to retelling the action/dialogue of segment 1 in which the teacher finds Andrew daydreaming. Tom establishes a causal link between Andrew's inattentiveness in school and his goal of wanting freckles. However, he fails to identify his friend, Nicky, or the teacher by name. He makes no references to Andrew's interaction with his mother regarding neck washing. He makes no mention of Andrew's interaction with Sharon nor of the ridicule associated with his inattentiveness in school.

Many of these information gaps are corrected in Tom's posttest retelling of segment 1:

> The book's main person is Andrew Marcus, and this is a picture of him. He wants freckles. He likes to count his friend's freckles. Nicky Lane's freckles. And he sometimes gets daydreaming . . . and um he misses out on certain types of work and this picture, he drops all his notes and this girl names, uh, uh, Sharon always like, she always laughs at him. When the teacher calls, "Andrew, Andrew," she (Sharon) always laughs at him. He brings over his chair. He goes over to his friends. He's gonna read. And he drops all his papers and he says . . . and he just, like, he wants to have freckles so he won't do stuff like that and so he wouldn't have to wash his face. He says, "Oh, this is my freckles."

After having participated in the reading conference, Tom's retelling of the segment was much more confident and animated. He identifies the protagonist by his full name and draws the audience's attention to the text's picture of Andrew. He states Andrew's goal explicitly and refers to Nicky Lane by his full name as he establishes that Nicky is the friend with freckles. He then describes in some detail the text's anecdotal reading scene in which Andrew's inattentiveness gets him in trouble at school and the ridicule by Sharon which results. Again, he refers the audience to the text's illustration. Tom summarizes the segment by establishing a firm link between the two problems which Andrew feels he has and his goal of solving his problems by getting freckles.

Jennifer read the basal version of the story. Her retelling of segment 1 was the following:

> It is about a boy named Andrew Marcus who has freckles. His brother Nicky made him have them. Right behind his neck and all over his face and arms. Andrew Marcus wanted them because his mother couldn't tell if he had a dirty neck or not, and he wouldn't have to wash it.

Jennifer's initial retelling suggests a great deal of confusion regarding the protagonist. While Andrew is identified by name, he is described as having freckles. Nicky is also identified by name, but described as Andrew's brother rather than as the person who has the freckles. However, the confusion is resolved somewhat when Jennifer refers to Andrew's problem with his mother as the motivation for his interest in getting freckles.

Excerpt 4, however, illustrates that Jennifer became a much more careful storyteller following participation in the reading conference:

> It's about a boy named Andrew Marcus who wanted freckles. His friend, Nicky Lane, had freckles. This is his brother, Nicky . . . this is Nicky and this is Andrew. They, um, Nicky sat in front of him and the back of his neck was full of freckles. He, um, Andrew wanted freckles so his mother wouldn't know if he had, he had to wash behind his neck or not. And he couldn't get them. So, once, Andrew Marcus tried to count Nicky Lane's freckles and, you know, got up to 86. And, um, the teacher was talking and he was, and she called Andrew's name and he goes, are you paying attention? And he said, "Uh, uh, sure." But he was still counting.

Other than the continued confusion about Nicky's and Andrew's relationship and the failure to identify the teacher by name, Jennifer's posttest retelling is faithful to the basal text. The basal presents Andrew's problem with his mother as his reason for wanting freckles. Although Jennifer does cite the attention, problem, it is the washing problem rather than the attention problem which is linked to Andrew's goal. The basal version deletes the anecdotal reading scene with its references to peer conflict. Although Jennifer's reading conference did draw upon life experience to try to create Andrew's and Sharon's views of one another, Jennifer does not refer to peer conflict in her retelling. It is of interest to note that the basal version does not provide Andrew's answer to the teacher's question,

but rather skips from the question to a new paragraph in which Andrew's and Nicky's conversation about freckles occurs. Jennifer provides the answer and offers an action of Andrew's to show that he was not paying attention.

These examples suggest that participation in the reading conferences resulted in improvements in the students' understanding of the texts' literary content, regardless of the version which had been read. There were, nevertheless, substantial differences in comprehension which were related to the reading of a particular version. These findings were supported in the summary profiles of each group's interpretation of Social Sequence 1, as indicated in Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9. Only that information which was related to Andrew's goals and beliefs, Andrew's view of himself, Andrew's view of Sharon, and the cooperative interaction plan is presented because these aspects of inside view and character plans were most salient in the reading conferences and the pretest/posttest retellings.

Table 6 profiles the students' understanding of the actions of the cooperative interaction plan. These actions were presented similarly in both texts. Prior to the reading conference, students in Group 2 agreed that the most prominent actions of the mutually believed plan involved the exchange of money for the recipe while students in Group 1 referred to all aspects of the plan: Sharon's offer, Andrew's response; Sharon's efforts to persuade; Andrew's consideration of the offer and decision to accept; and, the exchange. Because the basal version deleted significant portions of Social Sequence 1 but retained the cooperative interaction plan in its entirety, it appears that these actions were more salient in the basal version than they were in the original. However, after participation in the reading conference, students in Group 2 became attentive to the cooperative interaction plan's actions and referred to all of the actions in their posttest retelling. Group 1's posttest retellings indicate that the students maintained their understanding of the shared plan although they failed to achieve a consensus of interpretation about Sharon's efforts to persuade.

[Insert Table 6 about here.]

Table 7 indicates that both groups improved considerably in their visions of Andrew as a person, although the improvements were more dramatic for Group 2. Group 2 began by viewing Andrew as inattentive and as a daydreamer while Group 1 attended to several character traits as they discussed Social Segment 2. They mentioned Andrew's cautious nature in responding to Sharon's offer. They discussed Andrew's gullibility. They cited Andrew's positive self-concept in believing he could control the exchange; and, they noted how excited Andrew was once he decided to buy the recipe. Following participation in the conference, Group 2's awareness of Andrew's human qualities increased several fold. In particular, they cited his view of being ridiculed, his cautious nature, and his gullibility. To Group 1's initial consensus on Andrew they added an awareness of his inattentiveness, embarrassment, and belief that he had been treated unfairly.

[Insert Table 7 about here.]

Table 8 indicates the most dramatic differences in the group's interpretations of the story. Neither group referred to Andrew's view of Sharon during the pretest. After participation in the reading conference, however, Group 2 became attentive to several aspects of Andrew's and Sharon's interpersonal conflict. Group 2 achieved a consensus of opinion that Andrew viewed Sharon as someone who laughed at him and made fun of him. They noted that Sharon was not nice, had strange physical habits, and was not trustworthy. Andrew's view of Sharon, however, did not become an important aspect of the story for Group 1, despite participation in the reading conference.

[Insert Table 8 about here.]

Table 9 captures each group's vision of Social Sequence 1 prior to and following participation in the reading conference. During the pretest, Group 2's discussion of Andrew's beliefs and goals focused on Andrew's goal of wanting freckles to resolve his inattentiveness problem at school. After participation

in the reading conference, however, students in Group 2 achieved a consensus of interpretation on all the aspects of Andrew's real plan: They discussed Andrew's goal of getting freckles with respect to both the neck washing problem with his mother and the inattentiveness problem with his teacher and subsequent ridicule by his peers. They discussed his internal conflict in which he asked himself whether a freckle juice recipe existed and vacilated between believing that there was no such thing and there might be such a recipe. They discussed the resolution of the internal conflict in Andrew's decision to go ahead with the exchange, a decision which reflects Andrew's willingness to be deceived. Finally, they brought additional meaning to Andrew's decision by discussing his interpersonal conflict with Sharon. They noted that despite his ill feelings toward Sharon, he decided to go ahead with the exchange. The decision, thus, reflects not only the resolution of an internal conflict, but also the pragmatic cooperation of someone who wants to achieve his own ends, even if that means trusting someone whom one does not like.

Group 1's interpretation of the story differs in important ways from that of Group 2. During the pretest, students in Group 1 agreed that the story was about a boy who wanted freckles because he hoped to resolve his problem with his mother regarding the washing of his neck. They discussed his plan to get freckles with respect to the resolution of the internal conflict in favor of the self-deception that freckle juice would lead to freckles. After participation in the reading conference, they expanded their beliefs about Andrew's problem to include references to his inattentiveness in school, but did not reference interpersonal problems as part of the story. Thus, for Group 1, the story had internal but not interpersonal conflict as the motivation for events.

[Insert Table 9 about here.]

Conclusions

The pilot study reported in this paper developed an instructional context for the discussion of the literary content of fiction with young children and a method for the evaluation of children's comprehension of inside view and character plans.

Findings indicate that young children can learn to be literary critics as they learn to read. Indeed, to become an intelligent reader of stories, the study suggests that students must not only learn to communicate with the distant writer and monitor their comprehension of the text, but also to appreciate the elements of fiction which the writer has used in creating the story. Preliminary conclusions based upon the findings of the pilot study concern the selection of texts to be included in the reading instructional program and the quality of the instructional environment.

The Selection of Texts

The pilot data suggest that the literary quality of texts should be the main criteria by which stories are selected for inclusion in reading programs. If a story is important enough to warrant a child's reading, it should be presented in its original form. There is no justification for asking children to read stories in which substantial editorial changes have been made to shorten length or remove potentially controversial aspects. Such deletions increase the likelihood that more subtle literary content features such as inside view and character plans will be altered substantially.

The original version of *Freckle Juice* was not more difficult to read than was the basal. It may have been more controversial because the motivation for character actions was linked to interpersonal conflict, but if anything, this aspect of the original only increased its interestingness, providing food for thought. The students who read the basal version were as perceptive, if not more perceptive than the students who read the original version. That their version of the story denied them the opportunity to read the text as Blume intended is unfortunate because they would have grasped easily the greater complexity of character which was developed in the original.

Alternative means of selecting fiction for inclusion in reading instructional programs should be explored. One possible sequence is the following: First, a decision is made as to which aspects of fiction should be studied during the course of a year in elementary school. A comprehensive list of possible texts is then produced by experienced readers who review classics, award winners, and contemporary multicultural fiction to identify stories in which the development of specific elements of fiction appears to be a source of text complexity and reader involvement with the story. This selection is done at the local level by groups of teachers or, perhaps, by a publisher of reading instructional materials. From that list is drawn a selection of texts which appear to contain good examples of particular elements of fiction.

Second, experienced readers use an analytic technique to confirm or modify initial impressions about the contribution of a particular aspect to the story's literary quality. Third, if several experienced readers agree that a story's treatment of a particular feature is sufficiently interesting, the story is field-tested with a larger group of teachers who are asked to discuss its literary quality. Finally, if a large group of experienced readers agree that the story contains good examples of particular literary features, the story is field-tested with groups of children to determine if it is sufficiently engaging and motivating to warrant its inclusion in the reading program.

The Instructional Environment

The pilot data suggest that the quality of instruction is important, regardless of the quality of the text which has been read. These findings support the development of alternative environments in which reading instruction occurs. The context described in the pilot integrated a sociocognitive view of reading with a focus on the literary content of the text. By participating in group storytelling, the students created a social, spoken language context in which they constructed the meaning of the story, establishing communication with the writer. By engaging in reciprocal teaching, the students had an opportunity to act as leader as well as participant in using comprehension-monitoring strategies to verify their understanding of the text. The focus on literary content enabled novice readers to analyze a story in much the same way as would more experienced readers. In large measure, the similarity of the instructional context across groups compensated for discrepancies between the texts. Compensation helped the readers of the basal version engage in a discussion of the story which paralleled that of the readers of the original version.

The experienced reader's familiarity with the original story and its adaptation was essential to the success of the instructional environment. The use of an analytic technique to identify important aspects of inside view and character plans helped the facilitator gain an understanding of the writer's craft. The close match between the analysis of the story and the annotation which was used to guide the students' discussion ensured that most of the important points identified in the text analysis were included in the reading conference.

The readers of the original version usually relied upon reference to the text to interpret inside view and character plans in the story. On occasion, they relied upon life experience to bring meaning to the text. The readers of the basal version, however, were often unable to rely upon the text to interpret certain aspects of inside view and character plans because the text had deleted these aspects. To compensate for these deletions, the facilitator used the annotation to mark those points at which deletions had occurred and encouraged the students to draw upon life experience to fill-in many of the information gaps.

Despite the similarity of instruction which helped the readers of the basal compensate for information gaps by relying on life experience rather than text references to interpret the story, however, important differences in interpretation persisted. These differences were related directly to the particular version of the story which had been read. For this reason, the pilot data suggest that while the instructional context is very important regardless of the text under discussion, it is the quality of the text which carries the greatest weight in helping students become intelligent readers.

Future Research

The pilot study will be followed by an investigation of children's comprehension of inside view and character plans in fiction using a larger number of students and a 3 x 2 statistical design. In the full study, control subjects will not receive instruction on the literary features of texts, regardless of the text version which they read. Students who read the original version of a story will either participate in the integrated language instructional environment or a traditional context based upon a basal reader teacher's guide. Students who read the basal version of the story will either participate in the integrated language instructional environment or a traditional context based upon the teacher's guide for the basal version of the story. Results will be analyzed statistically and presented as the final report on this research project.

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Author Notes

I would like to thank the teachers in Merrimack, NH who participated in a 2-day workshop on the reading process for their thoughtful comments in discussing *Freckle Juice*.

I would like to thank the Grade 3 children and teachers of Hollis Elementary School, Hollis, NH for their willingness to participate in this investigation.

I would like to thank Kathy Starr, Cindy Steinberg, and Andee Rubin for their contributions to earlier analyses of the literary content of children's stories. I would also like to thank Chip Bruce for his invaluable contributions to the research and insightful comments on this report. Finally, I would like to thank Tricia Neth for her assistance in preparing the manuscript.

Table 1

Analysis of Inside View and Character Plans

Categories	Text Analysis	Data Analysis	
		Reading Conference	Pre/Post
Sentence #: text	X		X
Turn #: text		X	
Speaker's name		X	X
Speaker's role leader, participant		X	
Activity			
Group storyreading retell, expand		X	
Reciprocal dialogue strategy: question respond, clarify summarize, predict		X	
Focused discussion		X	
Content			
Inside view thoughts, emotions perceptions	X	X	X
Character Plans goals, beliefs actions	X	X	X
Other	X	X	X
Text Reference character name description exposition, action dialogue	X	X	X
Life reference		X	X
Interpretation literal inferential	X	X	X

Table 2

SS1: Cooperative Interaction Plan

Action	Reference	Interpretation	Instructional Context Group 1	Group 2
S makes offer	Text: A/D	L	X	X
A makes initial response	Text: A/D	L	X	X
S persuades	Text: A/D	I	X	X
A considers	Text: A/D	I	X	X
A decides to accept	Text: A/D	L	X	X
A exchanges $.50 for recipe	Text: A/D	L	X	X
S exchanges recipe for $.50	Text: A/D	L	X	X

Code: A/D = Action/Dialogue
L = Literal
I = Inferential

Table 3

SS1: Andrew's View of Self

Inside View	Reference	Interpretation	Instructional Context Group 1	Group 2
A wants freckles like N	Text: Exp	L	X	X
A is jealous of N	Text: Exp	I	X	X
A is inattentive	Text: A/D	L	X (weak)	X
A daydreams	Text: A/D; Exp	L	X	
A is ridiculed	Text: A/D; Exp	L	X	
A wants to improve self	Life	I	X	
A feels stupid	Text: A/D; Exp	L	X	X
A feels dumb	Life	I	X	
A is cautious in response	Text: A/D	I	X	X
A is gullible	Text: A/D	I	X	X
A is desperate	Life	I	X	
A is pragmatic	Text: A/D	I	X	X

Code: Exp = Exposition
A/D = Action/Dialogue
L = Literal
I = Inferential

Table 4

SS1: Andrew's View of Sharon

Inside View	Reference	Interpretation	Instructional Context Group 1	Group 2
S laughs at A	Text: A/D; Exp	L	X	
S makes fun of A	Text: a/D	L	X	
S is stupid	Life	I	X	
S is not nice	Text: A/D	I	X	
A can't stand S	Text: Exp	L	X	
S is a big shot	Text: A/D	I	X	
S is a boss	Text: A/D	I	X	
S is a know-it-all	Text: Exp	L	X	
A hates S	Text: Exp	L	X	
S is wacko	Life	I	X	
S is a pest	Life	I	X	
S is nuts	Life	I	X	
S is out of her gourd	Life	I	X	
S is a nerd	Life	I	X	
Bad luck to stand next to S	Text: Exp	L	X	
S has strange physical habits	Text: A/Exp	L	X	
A does not believe S	Text: Exp	L	X	X
A does not trust S	Text: Exp	I	X	X
S may have tricked A before	Life	I	X	

Code: Exp = Exposition
A/D = Action/Dialogue
L = Literal
I = Inferential

Table 5

SS1: Andrew's Goals and Beliefs

Goal/Belief	Reference	Interpretation	Instructional Context Group 1	Instructional Context Group 2
A wants to get freckles (G)	Text: Exp	L	X	X
A has P1(B): dirty/wash/ late/mother	Text: Exp	L	X	X
A has P2(B) attention/ teacher;	Text: A/D; Exp	L	X (weak)	X
ridicule/peers	Text: A/D; Exp			
A deceives self (G)	Text: A/D;	I	X	X
Internal conflict (B)	Text: A/D;	I	X	X
FJ = F	Exp	L		
FJ/F				
Pragmatic cooperation (G)	Text: A/D; Exp	I	X (weak)	X
Interpersonal conflict (B)	Text: A/D; Exp	I	X	
	Life	I	X	

Code: G = Goal
B = Belief
Exp = Exposition
A/D = Action/Dialogue
I = Inferential
L = Literal

Table 6

SS1: Cooperative Interaction Plan

Action	Reference	Interpretation	Pretest 1(B)	Pretest 2(0)	Posttest 1(B)	Posttest 2(0)
S makes offer	Text: A/D	L	X		X	X
A makes initial response	Text: A/D	L	X		X	X
S persuades	Text: A/D	I	X			X
A considers	Text: A/D	I	X		X	X
A decides to accept	Text: A/D	L				X
A exchanges $.50 for recipe	Text: A/D	L	X	X	X	X
S exchanges recipe for $.50	Text: A/D	L	X	X	X	X

Code: A/D = Action/Dialogue
L = Literal
I = Inferential

Table 7

SS1: Andrew's View of Self

Inside View	Reference	Interpretation	Pretest 1(B)	Pretest 2(0)	Posttest 1(B)	Posttest 2(0)
A wants freckles like N	Text: Exp	L			X	X
A is inattentive	Text: A/D	L		X	X	X
A is a daydreamer	Text: A/D; Exp	I		X		X
A is ridiculed	Text: A/D; Exp	L				X
A feels embarrassed	Life	I			X	
A is cautious in response	Text: A/D	I	X		X	X
A is gullible	Text: A/D	I	X		X	X
A is not gullible	Text: A/D	I	X		X	X
A is in control	Text: A/D	I	X		X	
A can hardly wait	Text: A/D	L			X	
A is excited	Text: A/D	I	X			
A feels he is not treated fairly	Text: Exp	L			X	

Code: Exp = Exposition
A/D = Action/Dialogue
L = Literal
I = Inferential

Table 8

SS1: Andrew's View of Sharon

Inside View	Reference	Interpretation	Pretest 1(B) 2(0)	Posttest 1(B) 2(0)
S laughs at A	Text: A/D; Exp	L		X
S makes fun of A	Text: A/D	L		X
S is not nice	Text: A/D	I		X
S has strange physical habits	Text: Exp	L		X
S cannot be trusted	Text: Exp	L		X

Code: Exp = Exposition
A/D = Action/Dialogue
L = Literal
I = Inferential

Table 9

SS1: Andrew's Goals and Beliefs

Goal/Belief	Reference	Interpretation	Pretest 1(B)	Pretest 2(0)	Posstest 1(B)	Posstest 2(0)
A wants to get freckles (G)	Text: Exp	L	X	X	X	X
A has P1(B): dirty/wash/ late/mother	Text: Exp	L	X	X	X	X
A has P2(B) attention; ridicule	Text: A/D; Exp Text: A/D; Exp	L		X	X	X
A deceives self (G)	Text: A/D	I	X		X	X
Internal conflict (B) FJ=F (B) FJ/F (B)	Text: A/D; Exp	I L	X		X	X
Pragmatic cooperation (G)	Text: A/D; Exp	I				X
Interpersonal conflict (B)	Text: A/D; Exp	I				X

Code: G = Goal
B = Belief
Exp = Exposition
A/D = Action/Dialogue
Exp = Exposition
L = Literal
I = Inferential